

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2005

Contact:

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WASHINGTON - Please join us for an [on-the-record briefing](#) about the work of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC), a non-partisan organization based in New Haven, Connecticut that seeks to remedy a deficit in the systematic, objective, and analytical documentation of human rights violations committed in Iran since the 1979 revolution. The presentation will focus on the deteriorating situation of religious freedom in Iran, especially the plight of religious minorities and Muslim dissidents.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of State provided \$1 million in funding for the IHRDC through its Human Rights and Democracy Fund to “promote respect for human rights and democracy in Iran.” Last month, the State Department announced it would provide grants in 2005 totaling \$3 million for educational institutions, humanitarian groups, non-governmental organizations, and individuals inside Iran to support the advancement of democracy and human rights.

The IHRDC was co-founded by Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi, and Payam Akhavan. Hakakian, a former television producer, is a documentary filmmaker and the author of *Journe*

*y from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran*

. Ahmadi is professor of medicine at the Yale School of Medicine and founder of the Griffin Center for Health and Human Rights. Akhavan, a former Legal Advisor to the Prosecutor's Office of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda at the Hague, is an international human rights lawyer and Senior Fellow at Yale Law School and the Yale University Genocide Studies Program.

**WHO: Roya Hakakian, Ramin Ahmadi, and Payam Akhavan, Co-Founders of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center**

**WHEN: 2:00 - 3:30 pm, Tuesday, May 3, 2005**

**WHERE: The Offices of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, 800 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 790, Washington, DC 20002**

\*\* Seating is limited, so please RSVP by calling Caroline Gobble at (202) 523-3240  
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, ext. 24 or email

[cgobble@uscirf.gov](mailto:cgobble@uscirf.gov)

no later than Monday, May 2nd \*\*

**The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

- Felice D. Prata D. Bansal , ,